

# SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH OF RURAL AREAS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND COOPERATING AMONG EXPERTS

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**Abstract:** This paper is aimed at relations among experts concerned with rural sociology in the Czech Republic. The research was focused on their troubles with cooperation and access to essential information for empirical and theoretical survey of the society in Czech rural space. The research is based on qualitative approach. Semi-structured interviews with experts from scientific and academic sphere and documents study were used as the data collection. The goal of this research is to encourage the rural scientific community and to answer questions related to troubles in cooperation.

**Key words:** Rural sociology, academic and scientific milieu, rural research, process of cooperation, the Czech Republic.

**Souhrn:** Tento článek se zaměřuje na vztahy mezi experty zabývající se rurální sociologií v České republice. Výzkum se týká jejich problémů v rámci spolupráce a přístupu k základním informacím pro empirické a teoretické zkoumání společnosti v českém venkovském prostoru. Výzkum je založen na kvalitativním přístupu. Pro sběr dat bylo užito polostrukturovaných rozhovorů s odborníky z vědecké a akademické sféry, a komplementárně studium dokumentů. Cílem výzkumu je podpora komunity odborníků zabývajících se venkovem a zodpovězení otázek souvisejících s problémy během spolupráce.

**Klíčová slova:** Rurální sociologie, akademické a odborné prostředí, výzkum venkova, proces spolupráce, Česká Republika.

## 1. Introduction

Authors of this paper tried to find out answers and proposals for improvements and intensification of cooperation among experts. Members of rural scientific community represent a minority in the scientific world and sources for their research are limited - namely in time of

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current crisis. But urgent issues of countryside and rural society cannot be solved without experts' help.

Cooperation can be defined as a common, resp. follow-up activity of the people within or outside the group, which is subject to acceptance of common objectives, compliance in the tactics and strategy of objectives' achieving and good mutual communication. It is understood as a strategy of social behaviour in order to ensure profit not only for myself but for everyone involved. In addition to cooperation, another strategy in relation to other people is competition. Groups based on cooperation, however, have greater productivity compared to competitive groups.

A theoretical background of the question whether to choose cooperation or competition in relation to the others is the theory of games (von Neumann and Morgenstern, 1944), where a typical example of such non-zero sum games is the Prisoners Dilemma Game (PDG). In the course of time, a shift from competition to cooperation may occur, in the steps as follows: 1. radical change in motivation: it is possible to demonstrate in the PDG that a strategic objective to maximize own profit and an objective to maximize difference in profit compared to other participants lead to destruction and minimization of the all participants' benefit. Promising is only the motivation that prefers a collective profit before all, or a motivation wishful to the other participants. 2. a willingness to voluntary loss, although the loss is not necessary if all the participants decide to cooperate. 3. action – it is not sufficient only to think about collaboration. 4. trust, which is defined as the belief that other participants will also change their motivation and will go the same way. 5. reciprocity – if only one participant of the group want to cooperate, the cooperation cannot occur. To achieve the cooperation, it is necessary that all participants have made all five mentioned steps (Great Sociological Dictionary, 1996).

The cooperation has also been related to social capital in recent studies. Social capital is, according to various authors, a specific resource (Bourdieu, 1986) or a value (Putnam, 2000) arising from the quality and quantity of social interactions which are based on mutually accepted rules of social relationships, on the trust in such rules and institutions ensuring them and on the trust in the other actors of social groups, network or society (Sýkora and Matoušek, 2008).

Cooperation or non-cooperation between scientific institutions is a question that has been solved in various branches and countries (e.g. Stafne and Kelsey, 2011). In post-communist countries, out of which the Czech Republic is an example, an extent and quality of this cooperation is also related to the existence of social ties and other components of aforementioned social capital that were initiated during the former regime. Cooperation among research institutions and individual researchers has also its own specifics that must be taken into account in addition to cooperation in general.

A situation when the competition would disappear from scientific milieu will probably never occur as strong individualities who researchers often try to make their names famous. However, trends in organization of science and research at the present time unambiguously support such phenomena as teamwork, cooperation between scientific institutions, sharing of knowledge, interdisciplinarity etc. In the contemporary Czech Republic's rural sociology, nevertheless, as we show in this paper, fragmentation, often many years of animosity and unwillingness to cooperation prevail.

There is not lot of experts aimed at the research of rural areas in the Czech Republic. This could be reason of a non clear definition of the countryside. Several methodologies and indicators can be used when defining the countryside (Perlín et al., 2010).

The most frequent indicator is the population density. The countryside can generally be defined as a space that comprises both landscape and rural settlements. Thus, the term countryside integrates both unbuilt territory and built territory of small settlements sometimes called a village. The structure of municipalities in the Czech Republic is then extremely asymmetrical: nearly 80% of all municipalities have less than 1 000 inhabitants (Perlín, 2006).

To define a rural settlement in the Czech Republic, a limit 2 000 inhabitants is commonly used for undoubtedly rural settlement (municipality). Some documents use a limit of 3 000 inhabitants. However, the number as such is not an exact or sharp limit. It is necessary to

state that settlements with unambiguously rural character and more than 2 000 inhabitants exist. Simultaneously, small towns with less than 2 000 inhabitants exist, whose city planning structure, architectural quality of houses or structure of economic activities is rather urban than rural. Other ways are described e.g. by Maříková (2007).

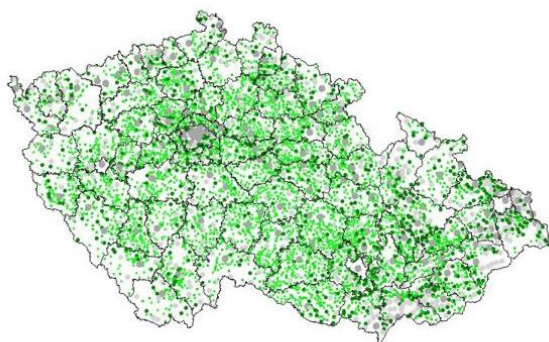


Fig 1. Illustrates map of rural settlement in the Czech Republic (each green point represents the rural community). Source: authors



Fig 2. Example of Czech rural communities

## 2. Rural sociology and its historical development

A development and fate of Czech rural sociology can be very well identified with political development in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The beginning of sociological research of the countryside in former Czechoslovakia goes as far as 1924 when Czechoslovak academy of agriculture (ČAZ) was founded. During the first Czechoslovak Republic (1918 - 1938), and namely after the ČAZ establishment, especially E. Chalupný, K. Galla, A. Matula, A. Prokeš, T. Čep and other researchers were engaged in the themes of rural sociology and agriculture. The ČAZ was initially under the strong American methodological influence, mainly because Gillette's "Rural Sociology" was soon translated (already in 1928) into Czech and original Czech textbooks were lacking. I. Bláha's work of that period "Sociology of worker and peasant" (1925) bears the marks of social psychological study rather than an empirically-based sociological work. The First Republic is generally characterized as a boom period of Czechoslovak culture and science. While a first boom occurred during the first Czechoslovak republic era, in the period of Nazi occupation the work only continued in limited extent (Pátek, 2004).

The interim 1945 - 1948 was too short, nevertheless, a revival of pre-war tradition occurred. Communist coup in 1948 marked the beginning of a long-term and systematic reduction of rural sociological research. In the 1950s and early 1960s, rural sociology was understood as something difficult and suspect, something that could challenge the ideologically oriented transformation of rural society in terms of visions of the KSČ (Komunistická strana Československa, Communist Party of Czechoslovakia).

Nevertheless, foundation of small departments aimed at research of rural society, particularly associated with the name Jan Tauber (see e.g. Tauber, 1968), occurred already in the first half of the 1950s. This researcher and many of his colleagues (J. Procházka, J. Špaček, J. Vavřík, Z. Pátek and others) then in the 1960s, in the period of overall release of socialist society, have become key actors in the establishment of scientific institutes, university departments and journals focused on rural sociology.

This promising development continued only to the years 1968 - 1969. Invasion of the Warsaw Pact armies and the subsequent start of the so-called "normalization" meant repeated decline of all the sociological branches. Many workplaces engaged in the field were abolished, others remarked reduction of the number of researchers. Rural sociology preserved in the minimal form in VÚZE (Výzkumný ústav zemědělské ekonomiky, Research Institute of Agricultural

Economy), however, results of researches were not allowed to disagree with the line of KSČ policy (Pátek, 2004). However, sociology did not vanish completely. The fact that it existed in the Soviet Union was a strong argument for its Czechoslovak supporters.

Also methodology of sociological research in rural field did not bring any significant advance in the period 1945 - 1989. The quantitative approach dominated in the after-war rural sociology in Czechoslovakia/Czechia. Although the rural sociology was renewed in the beginning of 1960s as a relatively independent branch, the methodology only had little opportunities to develop. In addition, after 1968, it stagnated and issued for a long time only from the information resources of the second half of the 1960s, when possibilities of the international co-operation existed and the methodological literature from abroad was accessible (Majerová, 2005).

On the contrary, in the period after 1989, the methodology of sociological research underwent a rapid development. The Czech sociology becomes a part of the world empirical research, gets acquainted with other methodological approaches, namely the qualitative ones which were not much known before 1989 and were practically not used at all (Majerová, 2005). Since 1989, the Czech rural sociology continues in developing of the quantitative approach for the research of rural areas and it gradually gains non-standardized methods of the qualitative approach as well. A typical example of recent research that combines quantitative approach with qualitative one was the project "Social capital as a factor influencing the regional disparities and regional development" – SOFARR" funded by the Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic. This research consisted of secondary data analysis and a broad scale of quantitative and qualitative methods of the fieldwork (Majerová et al., 2011).

Social changes after 1989 did not bring only renewal of methodological device but also an unprecedented growth of entirely new institutions, which can be related to the general trend of the establishment of new universities and scientific institutes.

For example the teaching and research of rural sociology has been started at department of humanity sciences at the High school of Agriculture (today the Czech University of Life Science in Prague – CULS). There were involved members of "old generation" like Z. Pátek, J. Vavřík, J. Špaček, H. Schimmerling and also members of "new generation" like H. Hudečková, V. Dvořáková or V. Majerová in teaching and research (Pátek, 2004). Teaching was encouraged by regular edition of textbooks by V. Majerová (Majerová 1997), H. Hudečková and M. Lošťák (Hudečková, Lošťák 1997). The research was encouraged by foundation of sociological laboratory (existing 1997 - 2010) specialised on rural sociology and represented by regular publishing of edition "Czech countryside" (2000 - 2008).

In a similar way the activities of rural sociology started at the Mendel University in Brno (e.g. A. Vaishar and his colleagues), at the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice (e. g. M. Lapka, M. Hrabánková and their colleagues).

Specific approach to the research of rural sociology is used by P. Klvač (the Masaryk University in Brno). His empirical studies are based on visual sociology (Klvač 2007, 2010). Environmental dimension of the research can be found in works of H. Librova (Librová 1994, 2003).

Other two centres of rural research were established under the work of department "Social geography and regional development" at the Charles University in Prague. The first one is represented by URRLAB (Urban and Regional laboratory) aimed at suburban areas and the second one RURAL aimed at social geography and represented by R. Perlín's team. Among other sociologists, interested in rural research, also B. Blažek (Blažek 1998, 2004), aforementioned M. Lapka or M. Gottlieb (Lapka, Gottlieb 2000) belong.

Experts, specialised on rural sociology, have established working group "Rural sociology" within the "Czech Sociological Society of Masaryk". Other possibilities of intensification research and cooperation offered conference "Countryside is our world" organised by CULS (2006, 2008, 2011), conference "EURORURAL" organised at the Mendel University in Brno (2008, 2010, 2012, 2014), regular seminars in Februar "Countryside" organised by R. Perlín (Charles University Prague) or other conferences directly not focused on rural society but including working groups with possibility of presentation and discussion about research in the field of rural sociology.

Appendix 1 presents overview of other main institutions in the Czech Republic, focused on the research of rural spaces and rural society. Apart from public institutions mentioned in the Appendix, non-academic institutions exist as well, nevertheless, they are not subject of this investigation.

It can be stated that at present rural sociology in the Czech Republic records a recovery, all the research topics that the current world and European rural issue bring are covered (especially rural and regional development, processes such as urbanization, counter-urbanisation and ruralisation, economic transition, changes after EU accession, environmental issues, current economic crisis, sustainability and resilience of rural, etc.) and the quality and relevance of published works are approaching Western standards.

### **3. Methodology**

One of the used and realized technique of data collection consisted of 12 semi-structured interviews with leading experts in the field of rural area research in the Czech Republic. The interview outline included three main thematic blocks (workplace identification and specialization, issues in the research of the rural areas and the form of cooperation). Each block had several basic questions and some additional questions.

First, three pilot interviews were carried out in Autumn 2012. Two new additional questions were added into the outline based on their evaluation. Then, further interviews were conducted up to the point of saturation. Each interview was carried out in accordance with the pre-prepared outline and was recorded in audio form. The interviews were transformed into written form for further processing. They were analysed by using of qualitative methods (selective and axial coding) in order to answer questions related to the process of cooperation and realization of the research. Another technique of data collection was based on the study of documents. Authors briefly tried to describe the historical development of the research in rural areas in the Czechoslovakia / Czech Republic and to process the overview of academic and scientific institutes presently dealing with this topic, see table no. 1.

#### ***Introduction of respondents and their institutions***

The set of respondents included 8 women and 4 men with age ranging from 30 - 70 years. All of them dealt with the issue of rural areas to a different extent from the perspective of different fields of studies. In addition to sociologists, the set of respondents also included a social and rural geographer, social and cultural anthropologist and ethnographer and several regionalists and economists (regional and environmental economy). Our respondents have focused on rural areas for 20 years in average (ranging between 4 - 40 years) predominantly from the research, scientific and pedagogic point of view at the same time.

Due to the different fields, the respondents dealt with rural areas from different angles. In their research and scientific works, they focused not only on rural areas in the Czech Republic in general, but also on: development of rural areas (in terms of social aspects), development of towns, regions, microregions, regional differences in the development of agriculture and rural areas, evaluation of rural areas and CAP (common agricultural policy), educational activities in rural areas, international cooperation in rural spheres, community sociology, rural culture (cultural sociology), social structures, mobility, gender, regional studies, anthropology, community functionality, social connections, participation of citizens in the public life, land planning, public administration in rural areas, connection of rural areas and agriculture, alternative functions of agriculture, energies or ecology.

As far as institutions are concerned, 10 respondents were from universities and two from research institutes. Some researchers were also involved in working for other research organizations or workplaces. Only three respondents live in rural areas (mostly in sub-urban areas), other three are connected to rural areas via cottages and the rest come from the city.

## 4. Results and discussion

### *Problems during the research of rural areas*

Questions in our investigation were focused at first on the research of rural areas and problems faced by the researchers during this task. We were interested in technical or administration problems (not specialized or professional problems).

The most frequently mentioned problems definitely include time and money. Both these problems were mentioned by almost a half of the addressed experts, often both of them at the same time. The problem with time was often mentioned in different contexts. This included mostly the time-consuming nature of the research and lack of time in general (not enough time for the research) and also the problem of "harmonizing time" with respondents.

*R7: "...for this research to have really relevant and valuable results. This cannot be done quickly. It must be prepared. You need to have the time to talk with these people..."*

The financial side of the research is also a pressing problem, which is related to another area, which is the interest in studying the issues of rural areas. Due to the current situation, where there is no demand for information from rural areas, there are no sources that would enable or support the collection of such information.

Less frequently mentioned problems (yet as significant) include the definition of a rural area. Everyone involved in the research of rural areas has to deal with this problem. There is no single accepted definition for this term in the Czech Republic. There are several ways to approach the definition, which complicates the situation. One of the consequences of this state is for instance difficult comparability of different research results and data.

*R12: "A significant technical and methodological obstacle is how to collect a representative sample of rural areas. Well, the definition of a rural area itself is very difficult...."*

The vague definition of a rural area is also related to the difficulty in accessing the data (statistic):

*R9: "It is clearly a problem of statistics. The statistics not only change in time but also different information is accessible on different levels in terms of territorial distribution. The most data is available in NUTS 2, NUTS 3. But then, if you go to villages, it is hard to obtain adequate information."*

Two other respondents pointed out to another interesting problem related to the lack of information:

*R3: "A rural area is really a wide term and everybody focuses on a little part, which is then studied in depth, but we are lacking a certain general overarching research. There are a lot of people involved in this area but they do not know about each other!"*

*"If you want to get a picture about what has been done already, there is no summary database available."*

The usual problem is also the demanding administration, which is related with the most frequently stated problem - the lack of time to carry out the research.

We further deepened the issue of data availability for rural areas by an additional question, which helped us obtain some positive answers that praised the availability of information from foreign databases, articles and books. On the other hand, the shortcomings are clearly manifested by the difficulty in searching for information about Czech rural areas, poor

availability of statistic data (related with the above mentioned lack of accepted definition of a rural area) and lacking coherent overview of the problem and related bibliography.

### ***Forms of cooperation in the Czech Republic***

The block of questions focused on the cooperation at first inquired about the reasons for starting a cooperation within the academic and scientific field. The experts agreed that the main reason for cooperation is the need to acquire financial resources. This aim can be reached by several grant and financial supports provided by both Czech and European agencies, which require, that the research teams consist of members from at least two different organizations.

Another reason provided by the experts was the research topic itself. The current research process cannot be realized without an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach. And of course, none of the organizations can afford to employ experts with such wide specialization who would be able complexly cover the whole topic. It is a reciprocity relationship – the expert becomes a looked-up subject and at the same time they search for other professionals outside their organization.

*R2: "... finding a suitable organization that would be beneficial for the research or that could help with the financial aspect of the matter... Of course, the topic plays an import role in the decision whether to start the cooperation..."*

Last but not least, cooperation is required for the data collection. Usually only the local organizations know the researched environment well enough. On the other hand, the local participants in the development of rural areas also need sophisticated information and high-quality analyses for their decision making.

*R1: "... they are closer to the rural area... they have practical experience with the realization of the rural area development activities..."*

The most frequent subject of cooperation, as stated by the experts, consisted of research activities. The form of this cooperation then mostly concentrates on participation in research projects and grants. This subsequently enables cooperation with other organizations (outside the academic sphere), for example in consulting services and information exchange.

*R5: "... we try to connect our know-how and their practical experience in the area of consulting services and exchange of information..."*

Cooperation is required also due to the necessity to inform the common as well as expert public about the research results, which means relatively high financial expenses, as experts claims. However, not only the publication of such results, but also their verification and inspection is important in order to prevent erroneous or double processes. The forms of cooperation are therefore expanded to reviews, revisions and control activities.

Cooperating on research also enables to deepen the cooperation activities in the pedagogic sphere – lectures, preparation of a new study subject, more precise specification of diploma and bachelor theses for practical application, student exchange programs and other forms of direct participation in the research, exchange of pedagogues, etc.

Another highlighted research activity was the cooperation during the preparation of conferences and workshops. Experts mentioned this in relation to the fact that meeting other experts helped them improve the efficiency of the cooperation and to build informal relationships, which the experts see as a crucial element for possible future cooperation.

Informal relationships are key not only for the creation of cooperation but also for the potential to maintain and develop this cooperation. The experts also mentioned that if problems occur, solutions are better found on the basis of informal relationships. On the other hand, formal

relationships are seen as a frame or base for the progress of the cooperation itself. If informal relationships fail, formal relationships can bring stable elements into the cooperation process. In other words, without the ever-present formal relationships, represented by written and mouth agreements, there cannot be any form of successful cooperation. E. g. Kabele wrote that deals could bring stability or elimination of conflicts but also crises into the relations (Kabele 1998).

The next part of this thematic block was focused on the problems and obstacles during cooperation. One of the key factors negatively affecting the cooperation mentioned by the experts was the lack of time. The reason for this can be found in the organizational system of their employers. Experts often need to focus on activities that bring immediate profit to the organization, whereas strengthening and development of relationships with other experts from other organizations often benefits the organization with a time delay. Furthermore, insufficient technical and service background leads to loss of time during work activities, which is then reflected in the lower intensity of the cooperation process. These factors, plus the required scope of activities of the experts, cause the lower level of specialization and high occurrence of problems when assigning time for cooperation.

*R2: "... we first need to accomplish the tasks from our organization... R8: "In order to have enough time, the amount of research unrelated activities of researchers would need to be reduced...."*

The second key factor leading to problems during the cooperation identified by the experts was a lack of financial resources in the public factor. Reducing costs of research of rural areas leads to stronger competition and lower willingness to cooperate. The grant and economic system in the Czech Republic "presses" on organization to have a large quantity of publications. For an organization to be able to withstand the pressure, it might be even easier to avoid cooperation to prevent sharing of already limited financial resources.

*R9: "... They are not interested in cooperation, they are afraid of competition and mainly of losing possible financial resources..."*

The lack of finances also impairs the cooperation in other ways. If an organization suffers from financial difficulties, they are not able to attend conference and workshops and build the already mentioned informal relationships. Problems also occur in case of uneven financial base of partners. The partner with less finances slows down the other partner.

Experts see other obstacles in cooperation in personal traits and characteristics of individual partners - skills, knowledge, experience, communication and coordination skills, etc., which are linked to a different point of views towards the content and methods of cooperation. In addition, there are personal animosities in the Czech Republic, which date back to before 1989, as well as to the transformation period at the beginning of the nineties of the last century. In both periods, experts had to deal with existential problems not only at their employers but also on a personal level. The combination of these facts can then result in the unwillingness to look for compromises within the team and subsequently lead to misunderstandings and to termination or refusing of cooperation.

*R11: "...I can't really imagine perfect cooperation because team members differ in their social status, education, experience and current personal situation; furthermore, the past of some of them might be seen as a burden or might be even unsurpassable obstacle for starting a cooperation."*

The experts also stated that for the research of rural areas (and namely rural sociology) and for the process of cooperation, the perception of rural phenomena as belonging under the topic of agriculture is problematic. This is reflected in the Czech grant system (lack of financial resources for the research of rural areas), in the possibilities for publishing of results (no journal



focused on rural sociology and only a few specialized on rural areas in social context), in the approach of the ministry of agriculture of the Czech Republic (little understanding for rural sociology as an important discipline not only for researching the life quality in rural areas), etc.

*R10: "... Everyone still perceives rural areas as dominated by agricultural activities regardless of the real needs of their citizens."*

At the end of this block we focused on obtaining recommendations for improving the situation in the Czech Republic and strengthening research activities. Experts pointed out to the necessity to create conditions for continuous cooperation in order to obtain experience that can be applied in future research. They put emphasis on deepening the cooperation within international teams to prevent isolation as in the period before 1989.

They also suggest changing the approach towards attending conferences. Attending any conference means high financial and time costs for Czech participants without at least partial compensation for the organization - papers from such conference do not fall under the so-called "point" system of the Czech Republic (with the exception of conferences included in the list of the Thomson Reuters agency, which does not solve the problem because nobody knows in advance which article and which conference is going to be accepted to this list). Reducing the competitiveness of the environment and putting more pressure on cooperation for grants could also improve the conditions for research in the field of rural sociology and rural areas in general.

The experts added that the engagement and willingness, as well as other reasons for cooperation could be increased by better financial evaluation of the researchers and focusing attention of the public sector on the matter, which would increase the prestige of rural fields of research in the Czech Republic.

## **5. Conclusion**

The research of rural areas faces negative heritage from the totality era (before 1989) as well as many current problems. One of the problems that existed in the past and is still pressing in the present is the animosity in personal relationships, which does no favours for the cooperation or research. Furthermore, there are several different definitions of a rural area and of the term rural. This causes discrepancies in the studies on rural areas in the Czech Republic.

Key obstacles interfering with the process of cooperation and research of rural activities, as identified by the experts, include two problems - the lack of time and financial resources. The reasons for these obstacles are seen the nature of the research of rural areas itself. Since the Czech Statistical Office does not provide the required data on rural areas, individual organizations need to spend large amounts of money and a lot of time to acquire these data. Together with weak demand for the research results, this directly threatens the future development of the research of rural areas as well as the cooperation.

As far as environment of cooperation in the academic and scientific sphere is concerned, a certain "schizophrenic" situation has been observed. On one hand, organizations are "pushed" to cooperate in order to obtain financial resources for research projects, to reduce the total costs of the publishing activities, to be able to solve topics requiring inter- and multi-disciplinary approach, and to create meeting possibilities in form of conferences or workshops. On the other hand, experts are hesitant to cooperate predominantly to avoid the risk of losing the competitive advantage and unique know-how, the division of already limited financial resources among more organizations and due to the requirements of their own organizations on profit in short-time horizon, which might not always be ensured by the cooperation process.

The above mentioned factors can be considered as shortcomings of the system. Better financial solutions and settings could eliminate at least some of these problems in the form of lower competitive pressures following from the lack of finances. At the same time the competition based on scientific results would be maintained. Better financial possibilities would also strengthen the technical and service support in the organization, which would save time and enable narrower specialization.

The personal dimension cannot be left out when searching for solutions for these problems. The personal aspect fundamentally influences the quality of formal and informal relationships. Successful formation of these relationships would benefit from continuous repetition of cooperation, including both foreign experts and young researchers unburdened by disputes from the past, since the professional community dealing with the research of rural areas is quite small in the Czech Republic.

Cooperation and research activities linked with rural area (excluding the topic of agriculture) in the Czech Republic are influenced, besides the already mentioned factors, also by the lower support and prestige from the public sector and citizens of the Czech Republic. It needs to be added, however, that the situation is changing also due to the effect of EU policies, which approach the support of rural areas in more complex manner in the sense of greater interconnection with the improvement of the quality of life in towns and villages alike.

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